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To the Editor:

As the National Park Service considers whether to close part of Beach Drive in Washington, D.C. from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM, I hope it will listen to its neighbors. We oppose closing a road used by hundreds of Montgomery County residents each day.

Rock Creek Park meanders through the District to Lake Needwood in Montgomery County. Beach Drive and a hiker-biker trail run alongside. I'm all for protecting these recreational elements, for they enhance our quality of life. But the park's other uses deserve consideration, too.

The Washington Area Bicyclists' Association estimates that 5-8 cars a minute use this part of Beach Drive during non-rush hour periods, i.e., 300 to 480 drivers an hour. These include visits to downtown attractions as well as trips to the doctor, the grocery or the day care center. As hard as we try, we can't manage all these trips by bus or Metro. People need options for getting around town.

That's why the Montgomery County Council just adopted my resolution opposing closure of Beach Drive. The Council recognized that the Park's neighbors in Montgomery County already contend with countless travelers who do not obey traffic control signs and speed down sidewalk-less neighborhood streets seeking access to the Park. Closing Beach Drive would only compound an existing nightmare.

I believe in regionalism. That means talking AND **listening** to neighbors across the proverbial back fence as we work through regional traffic congestion. I ask the Park Service to listen to the elected officials -- including the D.C. City Council and Congressman Chris Van Hollen -- who have listened to their constituents. Leave Beach Drive open during the week!

Nancy Floreen
Garrett Park

The writer, a Democrat, is an At-Large member of the Montgomery County Council and Chair of its Transportation and Environment Committee.